Percival Sidney Warren was a Fellow of The Geological Society of America for forty years (elected 1930). For over half a century he looked forward to the Bulletin of the Society as his link with the general field of geology, during the many years he was permanent stratigrapher at a lonely outpost located farthest north in America. He accepted the responsibility of this post in the Department of Geology in the University of Alberta at Edmonton, and was recognized by the geological fraternity as the dean of western Canadian stratigraphy. His stratigraphic domain ran from the 49th parallel of latitude to the Arctic Ocean, and from the Canadian Shield to the Rocky Mountains.

Dr. Warren belonged to that fortunate group of men that held no branch of geology to be less important, although he did confess to a greater love of the biostratigraphic side, with ammonites and brachiopods very definitely in first place.

He was born at Brechin, Ontario, on April 15, 1890, near the shores of Lake Simcoe where, with his two brothers and two sisters, he learned the discipline of work at an early age. His place of birth gave him wide stratigraphic scope, for his boyhood farm, in Ontario, was on Pleistocene glacial material caught along the boundary of the Precambrian and Paleozoic. To the north the Grenville Proterozoic rocks are located, and to the south the fossiliferous outcroppings of the Ordovician, with brachiopods along the trace of the Trent canal, waiting to be collected. The young farm boy collected, and the future geologist obtained an early insight into, and love for, natural history as expressed in geology.

His parents were John Bortse Warren and Mary Gibson, of Irish Canadian stock that had settled in Canada before the war of 1812. He attended the collegiate at Orillia, Ontario, and originally planned to become a doctor; however, ill health caused him to take outdoor work and he became a member of a survey crew in the cobalt area of Ontario. Here mining discoveries enhanced the glamour of geology; he resolved to pursue formal education in that line, and taught school for a while to save toward this goal.

Warren entered the University of Toronto, in 1913, in honors geology, but interrupted his education to enlist in the army, in 1915, with the 26th Battery of the Canadian Field Artillery. His military experiences in World War I had a profound effect on his subsequent career. He was wounded at Passchendaele, which earned him the opportunity to attend the Khaki College at the University of London. He also used
this opportunity to visit the classic stratigraphic sections in England, and his fossil collections, used later in teaching, were filled out with specimens collected while he was convalescing. He never lost this connection with military studies, and for the next forty-five years was a guest lecturer to the armed forces in military history and geography. His chief specialties were the peninsular campaigns of Wellington and the military geography of the Paris basin. Promotions continued; during World War II he was colonel-in-charge of the Canadian Officers Training Corps at the University of Alberta. During the war years he had had close fraternity with the American officers in charge of the Canol project, and as a result he was able to obtain official permission to study the Canol fossil collections from the Northwest Territories and the Yukon. At this time Canol reports were all stamped “confidential.”

Dr. Warren received the A.R.C.S. (London) in 1919; then returned to Canada in 1920, where he completed his B.A. degree from Trinity College at Toronto University. The great paleontologist, Dr. W. A. Parks, encouraged him to return to the University of Toronto in the field of paleontology (he had contemplated mineralogy first), and he obtained the Ph.D. from there in 1920. His thesis was on the stratigraphy and paleontology of the Banff area in the National Park in Alberta, although the federal government had commissioned him primarily to go in and find out why the hot springs at the spa were dwindling. The flow had been restored by the time he reached the mountains, nevertheless he went on to solve the problem. His solution is still accepted. It is this: the amount of rainfall and the amount of flow are proportional. This thesis became the classic Memoir 153 of the Geological Survey of Canada—the Banff Memoir.

From 1920 to 1970, for half a century, Dr. Warren’s name was linked with the University of Alberta and, indeed, that institution was known by many geologists around the world only through his presence. His descriptions of fossils from the frontier of Canada brought him international recognition, although Warren himself travelled very little in a global sense. He joined the staff at Alberta as a lecturer in geology in 1920; rose through the academic levels to become professor of stratigraphy in 1934, and head of the Department of Geology in 1949, succeeding Dr. J. A. Allan. In 1955, he retired to become emeritus professor, and was followed in the headship by R. E. Folinsbee, a former student of Warren. Warren continued to teach advanced stratigraphy for many years, where his students vicariously responded to the thrill of his first-hand stories of Dowling, McConnell, Kindle, and the other pioneers of western geology.

In addition to his teaching career at the University, he served as provost during the post-war years, when the veterans were returning to college. For a long time, he was chairman of the men’s athletic board and strongly supported intracollegiate sports. He established the Warren Cup at the University of Alberta for cross country running, which had been his own specialty until wounded in World War I. He was an avid fan of interhouse basketball and hockey, and personally played a tight game of badminton until well past three score and ten.
Dr. Warren acted on the advisory boards of the Research Council of Alberta during the years of its resurgence as an important scientific center after the second world war. He was the author of the paleontological sections in numerous field reports turned out by the Research Council, collaborating with J. A. Allan and R. L. Rutherford on these. These two men and Warren constituted the triumvirate of geology at the University for almost thirty years. Three very good friends, they also conveyed a real sense of friendship to the students, which became a hallmark of the Alberta department throughout the years.

For many summers Warren was associated with the Geological Survey of Canada, leading parties in the foothills of Alberta, southern Alberta, eastern Alberta, and southern Saskatchewan in cooperation with Drs. G. S. Hume, M. Y. Williams, and F. H. McLear. However, much of the research that Warren carried out was financed mainly by the meager salaries paid to professors in those days before World War II.

After the war, the resurgence of interest in the oil potential of western Canada brought a flood of fossils into his office and the spectrum of interesting oil geologists who follow petroleum. His office was a forum of biostratigraphic debate during the period of exploitation of that startling new idea of D. O. Boggs, that coral reefs were part of the Canadian paleoecology. The excitement of the discovery of the Devonian Peace River Island and its fringe of reefs was readily communicated to the students, as the raw data from the new oil discovery of one day was in the lectures of the following week, explicitly interpreted. Always generous with scientific information, Warren extended help to the field man, the office worker, and the visiting authority. If help in interpretation of new collections could be given, it was, and freely. His collections were open to those who came.

His philosophy was simple. Knowledge was to be shared. As a classroom teacher, Warren excelled beyond all else. He was rated one of the best lecturers on campus since he had the ability to get across his own clarity of observation, always carefully differentiating between the facts and the conclusions.

Hard rethinking of the facts caused Warren to reject Schuchert's Paleozoic picture of the paleogeography of western America. The portrayal of the Pacific transgression into Alberta was part of his lectures even before 1950. His early recognition of the Devonian components of the Exshaw shale, the Upper Devonian position of the Waterways Formation, and the Middle Devonian elements of the Flume Formation showed a clarity of observation slightly better than the observations of those who disputed it later.

Dr. Warren was one of the founders of the Alberta Society of Petroleum Geologists (1928) and was an honorary member of the Society until his death. He was an honorary member of the Edmonton Geological Society from its inception, and this society awards a P. S. Warren Prize annually for papers of distinction, and an academic P. S. Warren Prize for introductory geology. This latter course was taught for thirty-one years by Dr. Warren and inspired many to embark on a geological career. The student's geological society at the University of Alberta is named the P. S. Warren Society. Perhaps this honor by students, while he was still alive, meant more to him...
than other honors he received. He was recognized by his own. He once said to me, "We live on academically only in our students."

Dr. Warren was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada in 1931 and served as president of section four from 1950 to 1951. He represented the University of Alberta at the Tercentenary of the Royal Society in London, England, in 1960. He was a member of the Paleontological Society and of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists. He was one of the group that founded the Little Theatre movement in Edmonton and was a long time patron of the Edmonton Symphony and the Women's Musical Club. He was appreciative of good music, good art, and good conversation, or an evening of bridge.

His wife, the former Evelyn Runcinan, predeceased him in 1951. He is survived by his two daughters: Margaret (Mrs. R. B. Ferguson) of Winnipeg, Manitoba, and Mary (Mrs. J. E. Campbell) of Edmonton, Alberta, and by four grandchildren.

Professor Warren passed away in Edmonton on February 23, 1970, after a short illness. He had been soldier, scientist, and teacher. He was always a gentleman in all of his relationships with his fellow scientists, university confreres, and his students. We were all honored who knew him.

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